

# Clinical Radiology

Re: RCR audit of compliance with UK guidelines for the prevention and detection of acute kidney injury in adult patients undergoing iodinated contrast media injections for CT.

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Corresponding Author:	James William MacKay, MA MB BChir University of Cambridge Cambridge, UNITED KINGDOM
Corresponding Author Secondary Information:	
Corresponding Author's Institution:	University of Cambridge
Corresponding Author's Secondary Institution:	
First Author:	James William MacKay, MA MB BChir
First Author Secondary Information:	
Order of Authors:	James William MacKay, MA MB BChir
Order of Authors Secondary Information:	

TITLE

Re: RCR audit of compliance with UK guidelines for the prevention and detection of acute kidney injury in adult patients undergoing iodinated contrast media injections for CT

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR

Dr James MacKay

Department of Radiology  
University of Cambridge School of Clinical Medicine  
Box 218 Cambridge Biomedical Campus  
Cambridge CB2 0QQ

T: 07882459094

E: [jwm37@cam.ac.uk](mailto:jwm37@cam.ac.uk)

*Sir* - I read the report of an audit by Cope et al of compliance with national guidelines on acute kidney injury following iodine based contrast medium (IBCM) administration with interest<sup>1</sup>. While the results were thought-provoking, unfortunately the current NICE and RCR guidelines do not reflect accumulating evidence that 'contrast-induced acute kidney injury' (CI-AKI) may not exist at all and, if it does, the risk is very small and likely confined to those with an eGFR < 30 ml/min/1.73 m<sup>2</sup> <sup>2,3</sup>. Indeed, the very small numbers of individuals detected in the audit with 'post-contrast acute kidney injury' PC-AKI reflect this – and very likely IBCM was not the causative factor of the AKI in any of these cases.

An important point linked to this (but not raised by the authors) is that the risk of CI-AKI is so small that the diagnostic benefit of administering IBCM will almost always outweigh any perceived risk<sup>4</sup>. The most sensible approach in cases of doubt is dialogue with the referrer. Guidelines can of course be helpful to facilitate these discussions. There is much to commend the American College of Radiology (ACR) guidelines in this regard, which have updated recommendations reflecting the most recent evidence and take a more flexible and liberal stance towards IBCM administration<sup>5</sup>.

Moreover, at a time of increasing strain on NHS resources it seems unreasonable to suggest that Radiology departments take on the additional responsibility of performing and reviewing post-IBCM renal function checks – for a condition which in the worst case scenario is rare and very likely to be mild and self-limiting, and may in fact not exist at all.

Dr James MacKay

Clinical Research Fellow & Honorary Specialty Registrar  
University of Cambridge Department of Radiology

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